

Message Text

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16

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 PPT-01 SCA-01 L-03 /029 W

----- 084871

P R 061100Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9573

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0308

USIA FOR IEU/JSADLIK, IBS/PE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CZ

SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS' VISAS

REF: PRAGUE 0287 (NOTAL), 75 PRAGUE 0393, 75 PRAGUE 3018

75 STATE 284684

1. CHIEF OF MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT KADNAR CALLED IN PAO FEB 5 AND MADE FOLLOWING ORAL STATEMENT (PRESENTED AS NON-PAPER) ON JOURNALISTS' VISAS:

2. "SEVERAL OF OUR DISCUSSIONS RECENTLY CONCERNED THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PERSONS WORKING IN MASS MEDIA. LAST WEEK CZECHOSLOVAK VISA WAS ISSUED TO MR. DUSKO DODER, CORRESPONDENT OF THE WASHINGTON POST, AND WE ARE TO ISSUE VISA TO MR. MURRY SEEGER OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES. WE LIKEWISE INTEND TO GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE VISA APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY EMPLOYEES OF THE USIA WHO MIGHT WISH TO VISIT CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN CONNECTION WITH AN IMPORTANT BILATERAL PROJECT, ONCE THEY MENTION THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE USIA IN THE VISA APPLICATION FORM. "THE CZECHOSLOVAK SAID APPLIED FOR A SHORT-TERM US

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VISA FOR A GROUP OF PERSONS WORKING IN SHORT-

FEATURE FILM INDUSTRY AND FOR AN ENTRY VISA FOR MR. V. TILL, CORRESPONDENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS AGENCY. SINCE THE PROCEDURE OF CONSIDERATION OF THE VISA APPLICATIONS HAS BEEN MUCH TOO LONG, THE CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE WITHDREW THE APPLICATIONS FOR THE FORMER; HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL INTEREST IN THE VISA FOR THE CTK CORRESPONDENT."

3. IN RESPONSE TO PAO'S QUERY ABOUT VOA APPLICATION, KADNAR SAID VOA APPLICANTS SHOULD MENTION USIA BUT NOT VOA ON APPLICATION FORM, AND THAT THIS SOLUTION HAD BEEN USED PREVIOUSLY ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE. PAO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR POSITIVE TONE OF KADNAR'S STATEMENT, AND FOR ISSUANCE OF DODER AND SEEGER VISAS; HE SAID HE WOULD REPORT STATEMENT PROMPTLY AND WOULD HAVE TO SEE IF VOA SOLUTION WAS ACCEPTABLE.

4. AFTER FORMAL EXCHANGE ON VISAS, PAO ALSO RAISED OUR CONCERN WITH TREATMENT OF US IN CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS AS STATED TO MFA RECENTLY BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND CHARGE. KADNAR SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THESE STATEMENTS AND GOC WOULD TAKE NOTE OF THEM. PAO ALSO REFERRED TO KADNAR'S LENGTHY PRESENTATION TO HIM OF DEC 5 ABOUT VOA COVERAGE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND OUTLINED (DRAWING ON JAN 15 WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT FROM IBS/PE) RANGE OF COVERAGE IN TYPICAL WEEK. KADNAR RECEIVED THIS VERY WELL. PAO ALSO MENTIONED FRUSTRATIONS AT NOT GETTING GOOD ACCESS FOR INTERVIEWS FOR VISITING US JOURNALISTS, AND KADNAR SAID MFA WAS MAKING CONCENTRATED EFFORT TO IMPROVE ACCESS. FINALLY, AT END OF MEETING, CURRENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST RFE WAS NOTED WITHOUT ANY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT. (NOTE: EMBASSY NOTES WITH INTEREST THAT ZANTOVSKY FEB 3 (PRAGUE 0286), AND NOW KADNAR HAVE COME IN WITH VERY POSITIVE APPROACHES IN MIDDLE OF STRONG PROPAGANDA ATTACK AGAINST RFE.)

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5. COMMENT: WE CONSIDER THIS A VERY POSITIVE STATEMENT AND BELIEVE IT LARGELY MEETS OUR CONDITIONS. VISA ISSUANCE TO SEEGER AND DODER IS WELCOME, BUT MAIN CONTENTION WAS OF COURSE VISA FOR VOA CORRESPONDENT. ALTHOUGH IT IS CONCESSION FOR US TO LEAVE "VOA" OFF VISA APPLICATION, EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY MAJOR PRINCIPLE IS THEREBY COMPROMISED. WE CONSIDER THEREFORE THAT

OUR PROPOSAL (PRAGUE 3018 AS APPROVED BY DEPARTMENT IN STATE 284684) HAS BEEN AGREED TO IN ITS ESSENTIALS BY GOC, AND UNLESS DEPARTMENT OBJECTS WOULD PROPOSE TO ISSUE TILL VISA IMMEDIATELY. WE WOULD ALSO PLAN TO PROCESS ANOTHER JOURNALIST'S VISA JUST APPLIED FOR ALLOWING A SLOVAK JOURNALIST, LADISLAV TOMASEK, TO VISIT THE US WITH THE FOLKLORE GROUP, LUCNICA.

6. BONN IS REQUESTED TO INFORM SEEGER. BELGRADE IS REQUESTED TO INFORM DODER. SEPARATE MESSAGE WILL FOLLOW ABOUT PROPOSAL FOR TOPICS VOA CORRESPONDENT MIGHT APPLY FOR VISA TO COVER.
PERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, VISAS, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PRAGUE00308
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760046-0015
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760274/aaaacmxy.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PRAGUE 287, 76 PRAGUE 393, 76 PRAGUE 3018
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOURNALISTS' VISAS
TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, CZ, CSCE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006